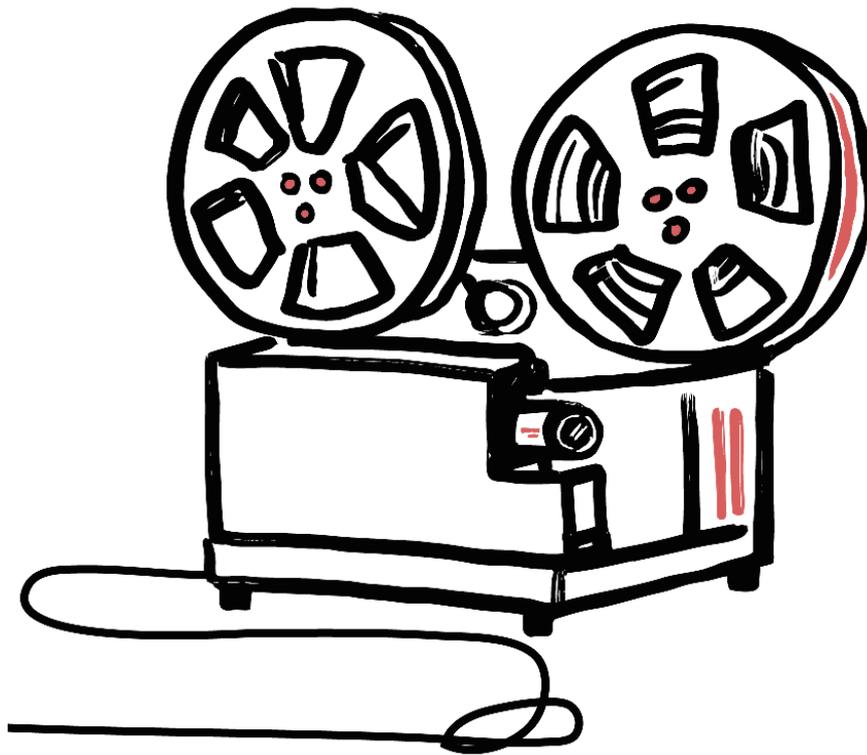


# EXPLAINER ANIMATIONS

FOR

Corporate Internal Communications



USING VIDEOS TO ACHIEVE  
YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS



**Next Day**  
**Animations**  
AMAZING EXPLAINER VIDEOS...FAST!

# Table of Contents

Foreword .....	2
Chapter 1: Your Internal Communications Secret Weapon: Animations .....	3
Chapter 2: Why Animation? Proven to Boost Learning and Engagement .....	4
Capture Your Brand Voice .....	5
Localize Your Global Message .....	5
Chapter 3: Animations at Work Getting Employees to Care .....	6
Creating Brand Ambassadors .....	7
The Role of Humor in Employee Trainings .....	8
Tone-Setting for Orientation .....	8
Enrich Your Events .....	9
Animations and eLearning .....	10
How Whiteboards Can Enhance Your Presentation .....	11
Celebrate and Recognize .....	12
Chapter 4: Best Practices .....	13
Chapter 5: Getting Started .....	15
FAQ .....	18
Conclusion .....	19

# Foreword

Yes, I know—a book about animations. Shouldn't we just make one long animation covering the same content?

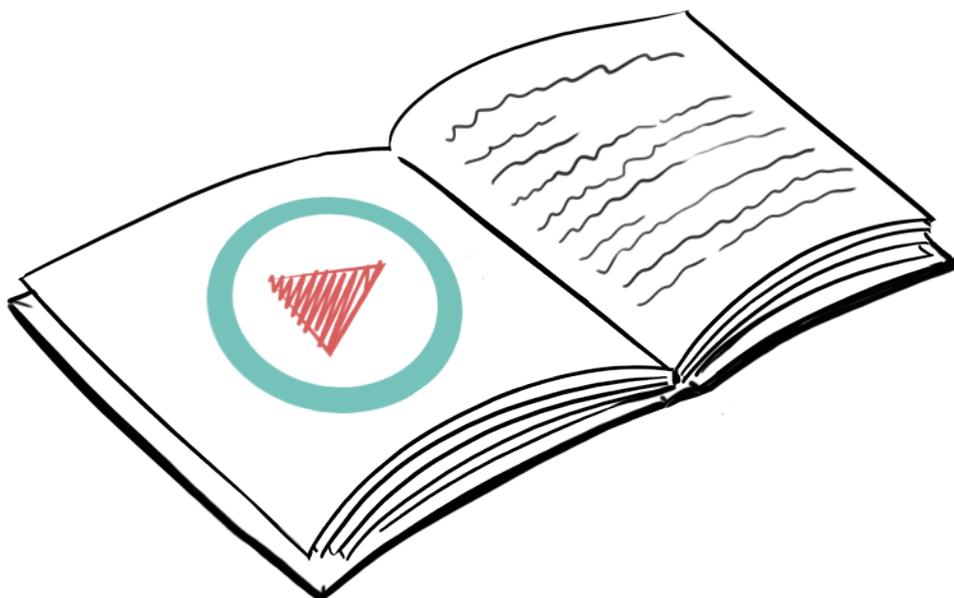
As fun as that would be for me (no, really!), here's the thing: A great explainer animation's job isn't to replace a training, a book, or a conversation. It simply can't!

An amazing animation's job is to excite and prime your team, setting the table for their buy-in. It's the trailer that gets your staff into the theater. It's the "Wow!" factor that entices your team into paying attention just long enough to get it, feel it, and understand what's in it for them.

In this book, we give away our playbook secrets (for free!) in the hopes that they help your team grow, learn, and develop a stronger relationship to your organization, and make internal communications effective... with perhaps a few more cats, robots, or caricatures of your CEO.

Happy animatin',

Caitlin Rogers  
Productions Director, Next Day Animations



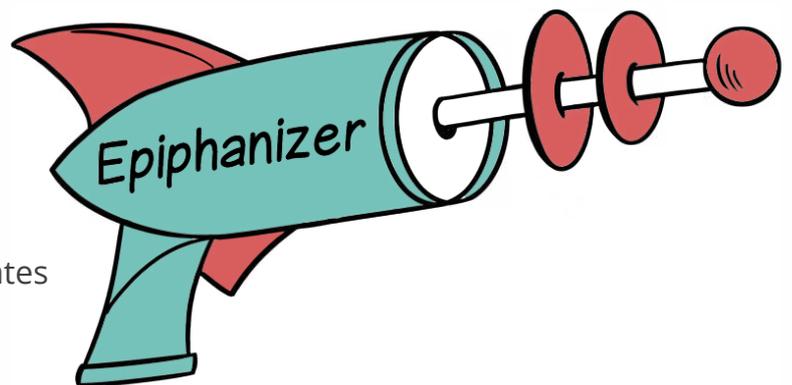
# Your Internal Communications Secret Weapon: Animations

If you're reading this, you've taken the first step to unlocking a powerful, game-changing tool for your business's internal communications.

Animations are an engaging, memorable, powerful, and fun way to communicate with the staff within your organization. We're about to cover everything you need to know to incorporate animation into your internal communications.

Here at Next Day Animations, we've worked with hundreds of organizations to enhance communications, build deeper employee relationships, and, at the end of the day, strengthen businesses. Here's a sampling of internal business cases where we've seen animations at play:

- New employee orientation
- Employee development
- Annual staff conferences
- All-company meetings
- Monthly updates
- Benefits explanations
- Policy or new initiative updates
- Celebrating key milestones



Which might be shared:

- At in-person meetings
- Through all-staff emails
- Online
- On an internal LMS (learning management system) or intranet
- In the office lobby or elevator

We know firsthand that animations elevate internal communications in these situations and beyond. The ways you can put a video to use are only limited by your imagination (or, sometimes, the imagination of your creative partners).

That's why we're excited to share **why animations work, where they are best used, and how to leverage animations** for your internal communications.

If this sounds exciting to you, let's jump on in.

# Why Animation?

In internal communications, you're up against some unique challenges:

- Urgent messages come up with little notice.
- Not everyone in leadership even agrees on what the message is.
- You're communicating across cultures, departments, and generations.
- You're stuck delivering news that people don't want to hear.
- You can literally see that staff aren't opening your emails.

And if you have spare energy and brain power after all that, you're on the lookout for new and engaging ways to communicate.

You know you need content that communicates key ideas clearly. And it needs to be on-brand and, of course, persuade your audience... for a greater likelihood of behavioral change.

Enter animation!

What makes it such a secret weapon for getting your messages across? Here's the quick overview.

## PROVEN TO BOOST LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT

Animations have been shown again and again to improve learning and engagement.

Studies show that 65% of the population are visual learners. That means they are more likely to learn new information through visual aids (and no, text doesn't count as a visual). The best videos seamlessly incorporate any charts or graphics that may aid quick understanding.

It's been proven again and again by researchers. One of our favorites is a University of California study on animation and learning, which showed the effectiveness of audio narration paired with visual on learning. Results showed that "To foster the process of integrating, [presentations] should present words and pictures concurrently in modalities that effectively use available visual and auditory working-memory resources."<sup>1</sup>

Or, to put it more plainly: **If you want 'em to learn, don't just say it—show it.**

<sup>1</sup> Mayer, R. E., & Moreno, R. (1998). A split-attention effect in multimedia learning: Evidence for dual processing systems in working memory. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 90(2), 312–320.

## CAPTURE YOUR BRAND VOICE

Your brand is the essence of your company. And while all companies have brand standards (sometimes exceeding 200 pages!), we have yet to meet a company with explainer animation brand standards. These are the stylistic rules that ensure an animation aligns with your branding—and we develop these together.

(Bonus: Once this is created, it makes future videos even faster to create!)

This means your video incorporates your precise brand colors, fonts, and logos to ensure a cohesive look and feel. Also, many companies repurpose the visuals from their videos in other visual mediums (like signage or print design). In that sense, **animation can not only match your brand but also enhance your brand across channels.**

## LOCALIZE YOUR GLOBAL MESSAGE

You might need to communicate with diverse staff around the world. How do you make your message accessible, standardized, and appropriate for a diverse audience?



Compelling, powerful visuals can communicate across language and culture. It's also possible to swap in culturally appropriate images (for instance, character demographics, clothing, or food), locally customized as necessary.

Do your staff speak different languages? Voiceovers (by native speakers) and any on-screen text can be translated into as many languages as you need, ensuring that everyone gets the same memo.

### CASE STUDY: LUXURY GOODS BRAND EXPERIENCE

*The Challenge:* A high-end luxury goods company (we can't say which one... but you know them) wanted a way to train its global staff in the ins and outs of creating a first-rate experience for customers. The content existed as a presentation that was given in person, but it needed to be more engaging and shared in multiple languages.

*The Solution:* Working together, we designed a whiteboard explainer animation that radiated the brand in all the details, from the voiceover to exact replica illustrations of their store settings. Most importantly, it tied in an emotional story of pride in excellence, and connected the training to the greater history and mission of the company's legacy. After the animation was completed in English, it was seamlessly translated into over a dozen other languages to reach staff around the world.

# Animations At Work

So you're ready to start making animations for your company. Where do you start?

In this section, we'll dive into content strategy for how animations can work for you by:

- Getting your team to buy in to your internal messages
- Transforming your staff into brand ambassadors
- Using humor to engage and delight during trainings
- Improving your typical new-hire orientation
- Creating engaging eLearnings that ensure retention
- Making a lasting impression with your next presentation
- Celebrating and recognizing your team's accomplishments



## GETTING EMPLOYEES TO CARE

Whether you're announcing a change in protocol, onboarding, or introducing an initiative, you want your staff to retain the information. So how, exactly, do you get people to care?

You start with what's in it for them. This is easier said than done—your goal is to put your perspective aside and jump into their shoes.

Here are some questions to get you started:

- What are their goals? (Hint: Their goals are NOT the same as the company's.)
- What are their daily pain points?
- How does this new info relate?

- Literally, why should they care?
- Consider the emotional context of the announcement. How will they take this news?
- How can you frame it in terms of their benefit?
- Is there room for humor in the delivery?
- How does this tie in to your brand's vision, mission or values?



**Starting your video from the employees' perspective will give it the best odds of being taken to heart.**

## (CREATE BRAND AMBASSADORS

Did you hear the one about the time John F. Kennedy talked with a NASA janitor? When asked what he did at NASA, the janitor replied with a smile, "I'm helping put a man on the moon!"



Your employees' perspectives shape the way they represent the company. You can have staff or you can have brand ambassadors. The difference lies in the way they view their role. An employee may see themselves as someone who works for your company, whereas a brand ambassador knows they are the company.

So how do you inspire that kind of brand ownership with employees across your company?

**The voice you use to connect with employees is critical to how they feel about their role and the brand:**

- Don't write top-down scripts—write from the first-person plural perspective.
- Seize opportunities to connect the day-to-day work to the big picture.
- Express sincere appreciation for their contributions.
- Highlight the impact their work is having.

If you approach scripting from the perspective of employees, you can share about the history and legacy of your company, and you can help instill a sense of pride in the work

# THE ROLE OF HUMOR IN EMPLOYEE TRAININGS

If you've flown lately, you've probably noticed that many airline safety videos are now actually—*gasp*—fun to watch.

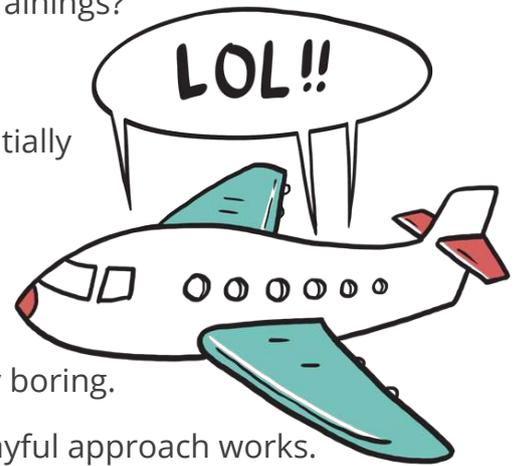
How does an airline safety video apply to your employee trainings?

**1. You have a captive audience.**

Much like when they're on a plane, your employees are stuck in their chairs... and potentially not thrilled to be there.

**2. You have important information to convey.**

Whether your training is on protocols, compliance, or safety information, let's be honest: Critical information can be hazardously boring.

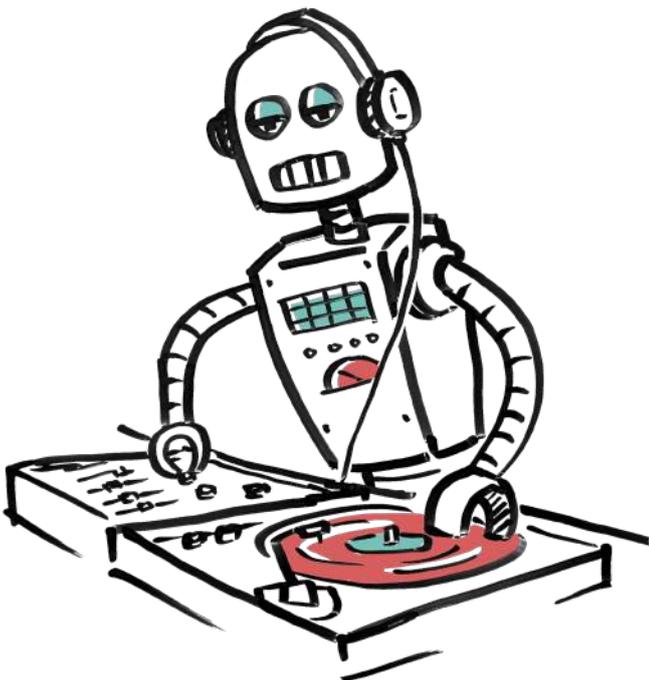


These in-flight videos aren't using humor by accident. A playful approach works.

That's why we strongly recommend you **incorporate humor into your trainings**.

How? Humor oftentimes comes from the exaggerated or unexpected. Don't worry about writing a stand-up routine—you might keep your exact script but include unexpected visuals. How might you sneak a cat or robot into the illustrations?

## TONE-SETTING FOR ORIENTATION



Think about a typical first day at your organization: paperwork, policies, more paperwork, handbook review. You want your new employee to enjoy their first day of work, but it's hard to make them feel welcomed, informed, and excited when there are so many forms to fill out and dry policies to review.

An animation can't magically make the pile of forms disappear from your new employee's desk, but it can break up the process and reassure them that they've joined a great organization. A short animation welcoming new employees; reviewing your organization's

mission, vision, and values; or outlining key policies can make the process feel less overwhelming and get them excited to start their new job.

Plus, animations can help capture and **share your brand's unique voice and the qualities that make your company a great place to work.**

Having these animations on hand can help streamline the orientation process as well. Of course, an HR representative should always be available to help someone walk through materials and answer questions, but animations can help mix things up, keep orientation interesting, and guarantee learning of key concepts. Plus, they are fun, playful, and unexpected—not words you normally associate with “first day of work.”

## ENRICH YOUR EVENTS

Large gatherings may only happen quarterly or annually (if that), so make the most of the time when your staff is gathered together to get everyone on the same page.

- Animations can be employed during virtually any point of an event:
- Announcing the event months or weeks ahead of time
- Welcome energizer video
- Daily kickoff videos
- Introducing a speaker
- Breakout sessions
- Animations on-screen between sessions (including a timer of when the next sessions start)
- Highlighting a big announcement
- Announcing award recipients
- Send-off at the close of the day
- Summary of the event for those who weren't there

Videos allow you to have the same approved content delivered consistently across events—for instance, you don't need to send the same trainer to all locations.

**Animations are a great opportunity to set the tone**—energizer videos featuring inspiring quotes or imagery with upbeat music don't even require narration to help get participants in a great mood.

We've also seen animations used during the break time between sessions—for instance, a scrolling feed of customer feedback with a timer counting down the remaining break time.

## CASE STUDY: UNIVERSAL STUDIOS HOME ENTERTAINMENT

*The Problem:* Universal Studios Home Entertainment had its big annual meeting coming up. Organizers wanted to thank and celebrate the successes of their talented staff as a way to kick off an employee event, and were looking for an original medium to deliver.

*The Solution:* Highlighting iconic characters and imagery, we developed a video to both celebrate the team's success and start the event on a high note. In fact, the video was so successful, they continued to update it with new imagery and use it for multiple events.

## ANIMATIONS AND ELEARNING

Learning in the modern workplace is hard. As more organizations turn to eLearning for their training needs, facilitators are incorporating animations into their Learning Management System (LMS) to allow them to:

- Reach thousands of employees.
- Keep staff engaged.
- Ensure that content works with their LMS and other ever-evolving platforms.
- Globalize their message for audiences around the world.
- Keep training sessions fresh, fun, and memorable.



# HOW WHITEBOARDS CAN ENHANCE YOUR PRESENTATION

Let's say you've got a big presentation coming up—maybe you're speaking at your company's annual meeting, planning a seminar for your team, or running a training for new staff. Whatever the occasion, giving a presentation can be a lot of pressure. All eyes are on you, and you may only have a short amount of time to make a big impression. So how do you make the most of your time?



Creating a whiteboard animation to accompany your presentation can be a game-changer; you may find that it's exactly what you need to make your presentation land well. To avoid the PowerPoint pitfall, you can **use an animation to stand out, mix up your format, and make your point.**

Here are a few ways to incorporate an animation into a presentation:

- Brief introduction to orient and engage right off the bat
- Case study of success story
- Training with interactive quiz to track retention
- Several short vignettes to summarize key points

## CASE STUDY: TEAM VISION/VALUE TRAINING

*The Problem:* Johnson & Johnson needed a way to share its vision and values with an internal team in an inspiring, engaging manner.

*The Solution:* An animation to quickly and clearly explain its four core values to feature at a staff presentation. A powerful script, uplifting music, and charming illustrations created an inspiring, unifying video that got the whole team on board.

## CELEBRATE AND RECOGNIZE

When people are recognized at work, they are happier and they work harder, so it should come as no surprise that animations can serve as the perfect way to celebrate and recognize your team. We highly recommend drawing in illustrations based on actual staff members (making them look good, of course). **By including actual recognizable characters, you can add a little delight to company milestones!**



# Best Practices

So you're ready to get started. Whether you're working with a partner (like Next Day Animations) or getting started without one, **here are some tips for a smooth animation process:**

## GET CLEAR

Here are some questions, the answers to which you'll want clarity and agreement on before you start:

Purpose:	Messaging:	Approvals:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is the goal of this video?</li><li>• Where will this video be used?</li><li>• When do you need it by?</li><li>• Who is your target audience? - Job title? Age? Pain points?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is your core message?</li><li>• Why should they care?</li><li>• How will this video connect to your larger communications strategy?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Who will be involved in providing edits?</li><li>• Who will be involved in approving the video?</li><li>• Does legal need to sign off?</li><li>• Do leaders need to sign off?</li></ul>

## PREVENTING DESIGN BY COMMITTEE

You know what a camel is? A horse designed by committee.

It's important to get the right people involved at the right stages. As soon as your group gets larger than three, it's hard to manage the process. If you must include a larger group, you can prevent design by committee in the following ways:

1. Get everyone on the same page (see the last section).
2. Limit internal revision rounds.
3. Set clear deadlines for revisions.
4. Appoint a point person to facilitate.
5. Delegate design decisions to one person, ideally a person who already does design or communications.

# USE A VOICEOVER ARTIST

It's no secret that voices have an emotional impact on us. Babies first experiences of sound include voices heard in utero. Alzheimer's patients' memories are sparked by certain singers from their past. Our voices are the means through which we communicate our stories.

This is why voiceovers are so important in animations—they create emotional experiences for the viewer.

So why use a professional voice actor?

## **You want nuance.**

Depending on your intonation, the same statement can be said as a question or command, as sarcastic or affirming, as dreamy or grounded. The best scripts are clear but nuanced. A pro can convey complicated emotions with ease, using intonation, tone, stress, tempo, pause, timbre, and rhythm to say the unsaid. Actors know how to make a commercial sound like a commercial and how to make a training sounds like a training. Believe it or not, there are different intonations associated with television and radio— and everything in between.

## **You want your message to stick.**

A lot of what we understand has to do with how something is said. A script is like a piece of music. There are choruses that get lodged in our heads, crescendos that stick in our hearts. Voice actors know how to work with animation to make your message sing.

## **Pro voice actors have pro equipment.**

Professional voice actors are experts at what they do, and they have the equipment to prove it. Recording a high-quality voiceover requires way more than just talking into your computer mic. Professionals have recording studios equipped with everything



needed to make a voiceover sound clear, crisp, and impactful. Plus, professionals know how to edit a voiceover to make it the best it can be.

## GETTING STARTED

Maybe you have some potential animation ideas floating around in your head as you've been reading this—and if so, great! When you're ready to start, the first step with Next Day Animations is setting up a kickoff call by calling 202-747-0404. Prior to kickoff, you'll need to ask yourself more questions to get the creative juices flowing. Don't worry—we'll provide a questionnaire for you to fill out that has everything laid out for you.

These include questions about the following:

- **Your goal:** What do you hope your video will accomplish? How will you consider it a success?
- **Your audience:** Will this be used across regions? Job titles? Be as specific as possible.
- **Your core message:** What's the story you want to share?
- **Your strategy:** Where are you hoping to share your video? Intranet? Annual event? Trainings? Email campaign to all staff? This defines what our call to action will be, too.

### Consultation

It all starts when you get in touch with us, either by phone or by email. Initially, we go over your big-picture idea and goals, talk about things like length and style, and talk about process.

### Proposal

Once that initial call is over, we prepare a document for you that outlines everything we discussed, including prices. This is your opportunity to take a look, share it with your team, and let us know if you have any questions. If it all looks good to go, we move on to the next step in our process.

### Kickoff Call

As the name suggests, this is the official launch of the project. Before the call takes place, we send you a questionnaire to help us get acquainted with your project and to



guide our conversation. Then, on the call, our team meets with yours for about an hour to get into the nitty-gritty of your project. We ask questions about your audience, your objectives, and your organization as a whole. We get to know you so we can best capture your essence via animation. This is also the point at which we establish expectations and timeline so we are all on the same page.

## Scripting

As soon as the kickoff call ends, our scriptwriter gets started on a first draft of your script, working to capture your voice, goals, and message while these are fresh in their mind. Your script will include the narration as well as descriptions of what visuals will appear on the screen.



Our best scripts are created collaboratively; you're the expert in what you do, who your audience is, what they know, and what they care about, and we're the experts in writing compelling and emotionally driven scripts that hook the audience's attention, keep 'em watching, and drive them to take action.

That's why the next step is typically sending a working copy back and forth for edits. The majority of scripts are approved after two to four rounds of revision, though we allow unlimited script revisions—ultimately, we want you to be thrilled with your script and keep working on it until you are! Once your script is approved, we consider it “locked” and ready to move on to the next step.

## Animation

This is where the magic happens and we begin bringing your message to life! Once the script is finalized, we have a brief design call where we talk colors, style, music, and more.

Then we work with a team of illustrators, voice actors, and animators to create your animation. Once we've brought it all together, we deliver you an initial draft.

In animation, we have three iterative rounds of revision. Make sure you've shared it with everyone who needs to review it before you send feedback to us on the provided edit request form.

A note on branding: Most organizations have brand guidelines but not necessarily animation guidelines. We'll work together to figure these out to match your brand voice and standards.

After the revision rounds and your sign-off comes the most exciting part!

## Final Files Delivered

We send you an email with a link to download your HD movie file, and the video is now yours. We also share a "Care and Feeding" document with best practices on how to use and share your animation. Congratulations!



## TIPS FOR A SMOOTH PROCESS

- **Get the right colleagues involved.** Too many stakeholders can really slow the process, but you don't want to move a project forward without getting the approval that matters. Think carefully about who should be included in decision making for this project.
- **Don't forget legal.** Your legal department might have an opinion. Clear the script with them early.
- **9th-hour changes are better than 11th-hour changes.** The more time you can give us to implement changes, the better.
- **There is a "Big Red Button."** It'll undoubtedly cost more money and time, but last-minute changes are always possible.

# Frequently Asked Questions

- **How long does it take to make an animation?**

We can produce a video for just about any deadline, but our recommended non-rush process takes about four to six weeks from start to finish.

- **We need a video tomorrow/in a week! Can you help?**

Yes! As Next Day Animations, we have a reputation to uphold. Rush videos will affect pricing, so if you're able to forecast your need ahead of time, the cost will be lower.

- **What styles of animation do you make?**

We specialize in whiteboard, 2D, 3D, vector, character, and stop-motion animations.

- **Can I provide my own script?**

If you've already got a working script that you like, that's great! We'll most likely make some suggestions to ensure it's optimized for the medium and easy to understand for your audience.

- **Can I provide my own voiceover?**

If needed, we can work from your recording—but we generally discourage clients from creating their own voiceover. The best-quality recordings require specialized equipment and a trained professional voice actor, and we're always happy to work with you to find a voiceover artist with a voice and style that are similar to your own.

- **How much does one of these cost?**

Length, style, deadline, and number of videos all factor into the price. Call 202-747-0404 for an exact amount.



# Conclusion

We hope that in reading through this, you've had an "aha!" moment about how animation could help you communicate within your organization.

While animations can't replace face-to-face conversations, they can:

- Streamline communication with a large, diverse group.
- Get and keep your audience's attention.
- Help staff make connections and retain information.
- Capture your brand voice and look, and inspire trust in your organization.
- Save you time and make you look good.

If you're ready to get started or you just want to chat about some of the ideas floating around in your head, we're here to help. We're your friendly animation experts, and we're just a phone call away. **Let's do it!**

